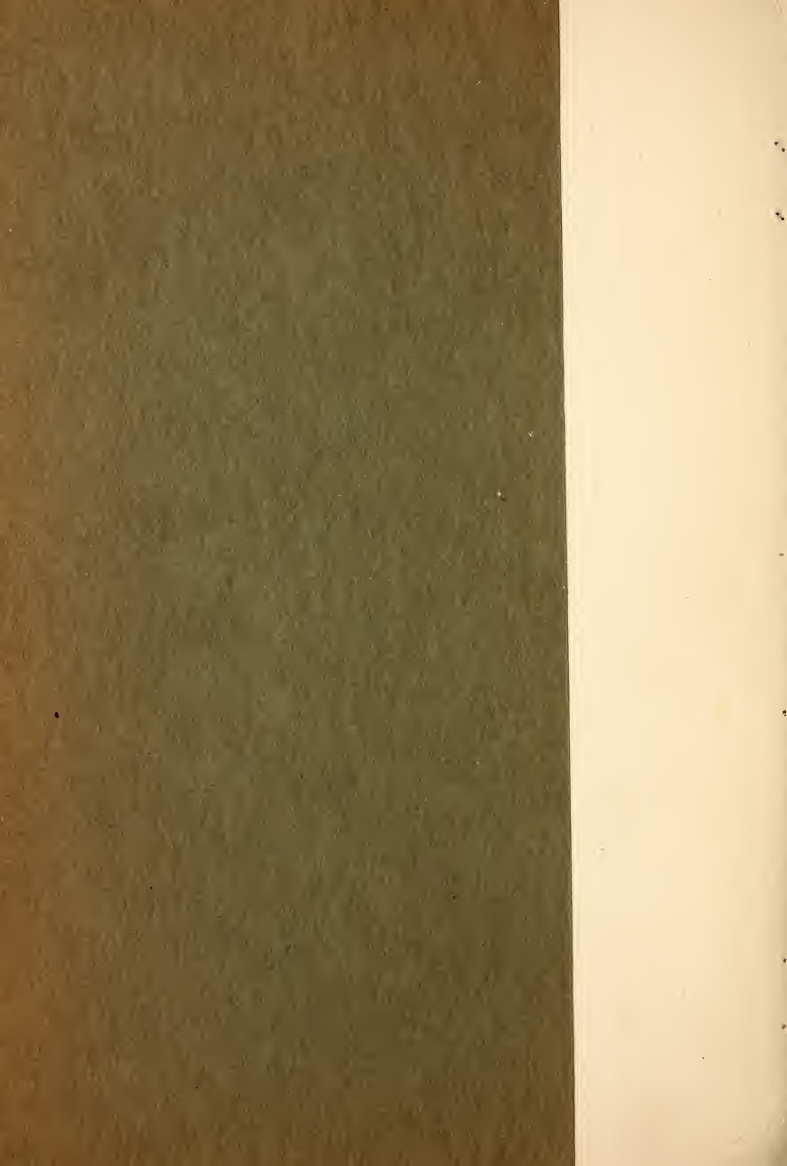



JEFFERSON DAVIS
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
BOWE

BY · BEN · BLOW





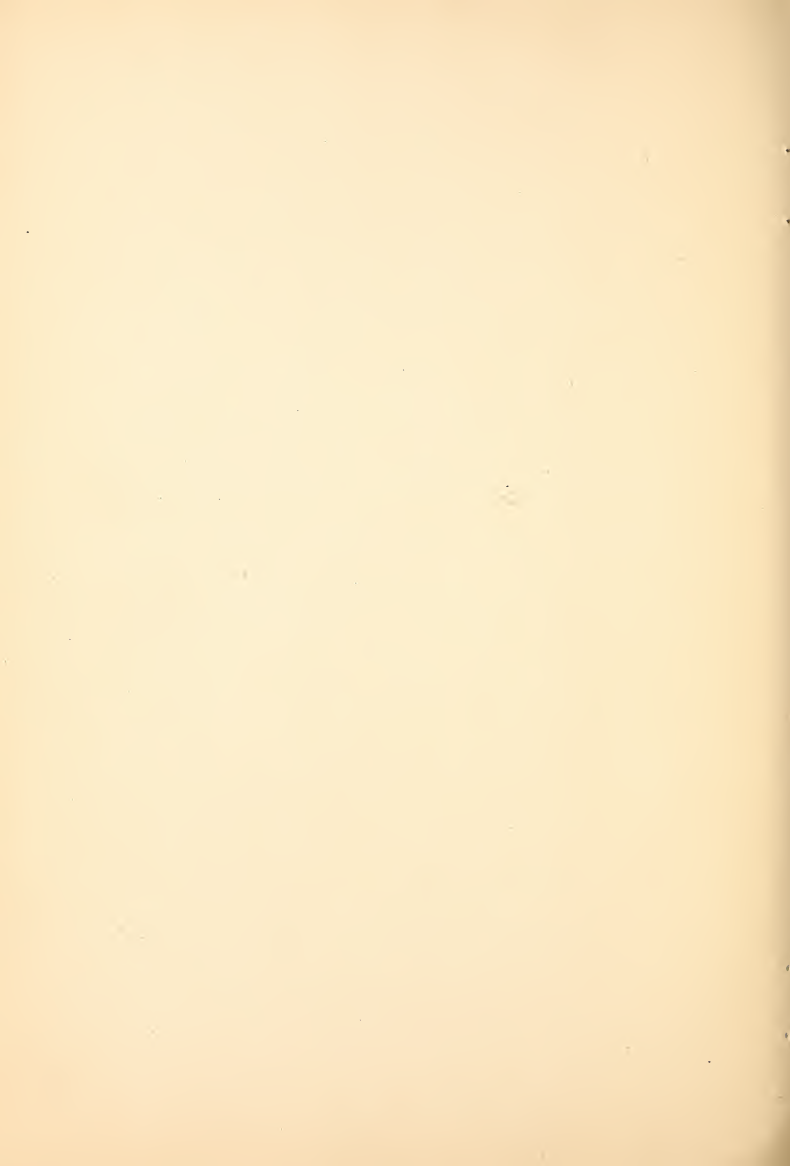


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For Miss Hughes.
with the compliments
of Ben Bow.



JEFFERSON DAVIS ABRAHAM
LINCOLN BOWE



A grin spread over David's face
Page 23

JEFFERSON DAVIS
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
~ BOWE ~

BY BEN BLOW

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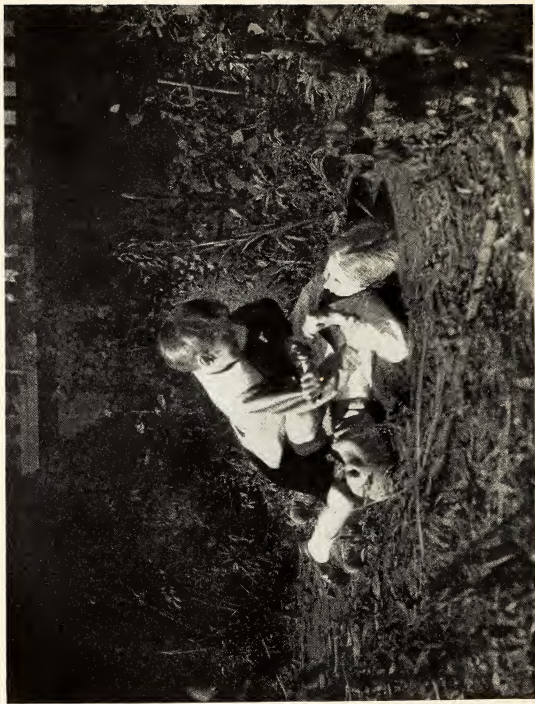
BY

TAYLOR & TAYLOR

San Francisco

To
JONATHAN





The Union forces grapple with the Confederates
Pages 8 and 9



*JEFFERSON DAVIS ABRAHAM
LINCOLN BOWE*

IT was a long time ago to you of the present generation. Just after the Civil War, when its wounds were still unhealed, there were two little boys, brothers, near of an age. They were David and Jonathan—sometimes; at others they fought, as healthy brothers will, but when their fights were over there was never any malice left to cloud their brotherly love, and when the Sand Man came in the evening he found them invariably at peace.

Before the advent of the Sand Man, though, they held carnival under the canopy of a huge old-fashioned, four-posted bed, and engaged in marvelous tumblings that became drowsier and more somnolent until their eyes grew too heavy, and then they curled up like kittens and wandered forth together, wearing canton-flannel night drawers, into the land of dreams.

The sweet-faced mother of the little boys told them that they were doing wrong when they fought, and when she caught them in the stress of battle made them stand up before her, holding hands, and say in reluctant unison, "Let dogs delight—" And then they had to kiss, which wasn't by any means manly, and was distasteful to a degree. But when their

big black-eyed, black-bearded father caught them fighting he stopped the battle and made solemn inquiries while his eyes danced, and then told David or Jonathan, whichever deserved it, that he ought to spank him, but instead of doing so, gave each one of them a five-cent shinplaster, which was untold wealth while it lasted, and always was productive of fragile resolutions never to be bad again.

Most of the play of David and Jonathan related to warlike operations, for military spirit was still very much alive, and they drilled and erected prodigious earthworks until wearied, when they fell upon the earthworks and made them into wonderful mud pies in a real tin oven constructed for them by their friend the gar-

dener, whose resourcefulness caused them much wonder and led them to address him admiringly as "Mr." O'Brien, which was entirely grateful to his good old Celtic soul.

"Of all the bothersome childer!" was his oft-repeated exclamation. "An' me busy! Whut is it ye wish, darlints?" And then, being their abject slave, he did whatever they wanted, delighted that a gracious Providence had placed him where his true worth met with its meed.

"They're divils," he told the cook over and over again. "But there's nothin' morally bad about them. Pouf! an' they fight like powder flashes in the pan, but befoor they're done fightin' they're laughin'. My! 'tis the pure love of a ruction drives thim to it; 'tis me says they'll both make min."

Then Mr. O'Brien would shake his head wisely, and the cook would shake hers and say: "Shure, 'tis you, Misther O'Brien, that notuses ut all an' all," for the cook, equally with David and Jonathan, admired Mr. O'Brien to a degree.

There is an infinite pathos in childhood—the ignorance that clears slowly and the mysteries that puzzle childish hearts. David and Jonathan were told one day that they had a baby sister, and that, marvelous to relate, she had been found in a basket by the doctor out by the gate.

This was so utterly unusual that wise counsel was deemed necessary, and Mr. O'Brien was consulted at once.

"Shure," he explained, "'tis nothin'.

Your mamma prrayed for ut an' ut wuz giv'n her. They alwuz come in baskits, an' ginrully 'tis the docther finds thim. I remember the time whin the both of ye's wuz found.

"Shure, ye wuz litthel an' red like yer babby sisther," he said in reply to questionings, "an' she'll grow up as big an' as straight as the both of ye's, or I misdoubt me much."

The baby sister did grow valiantly, and became very formidable with her fists, but demanded much attention, and David and Jonathan were left more to themselves. They fought without either much interruption or malice, and promptly forgot and forgave until at length a disturbing element came into their lives that created

much turmoil while it lasted, and even shadowed their brotherly love.

The disturbing element was a doll—a man doll. He was a present from a maiden aunt to the boys' little sister; a present that she resolutely refused to accept and fought against with bediapered legs and pudgy fists. Girl dolls she loved absorbingly, and in those intervals when she was not stuffing her mouth full of her own pink toes she evidenced a budding maternal instinct by trying to swallow the varied assortment that had been showered upon her, but when the man doll was presented for consideration she screamed in such maidenly affright that her father, smiling proudly, declared that here at last was a born old maid.

So the man doll fell to David and Jonathan to have and to hold, to cherish or abuse as they saw fit, all of which they did conscientiously, with attention to detail that was commendable indeed. They squabbled over who should possess him in the present, and dragged him into the midst of their battles, whereby he suffered grievously, losing one arm and all the sawdust out of his stomach, besides being scalped so cleanly that there wasn't even one hair left on his shiny head.

Between battles, and until a proper appellation was decided upon, in those rare moments when peace seemed best, they gravely said "Him," but when some boyish perverseness seized David he declared that the doll should be named Abraham

Lincoln, whereupon Jonathan asserted that he chose to call him Jefferson Davis, and would permit nothing else, and then there was always a fresh fight.

Between fights, however, the doll developed into a splendid military hero, performing alone and unaided many valorous operations of transcendent difficulty; but all of those deeds were undertaken *incognito*, for David would not permit Jefferson Davis to indulge in any acts of conspicuous gallantry, while Jonathan equally refused to let Abraham Lincoln flaunt the red badge of courage in his face.

Chancing upon them one day entangled in a squirming heap that rested upon the sad object of contention, their father separated them and inquired into motive

causes, discovering that back at the ultimate beginning was a mere difference over a name.

David was crying more from the humiliation of being underneath than from any real injuries received, but Jonathan was debonair, and little flashes of light flecked the hazel of his eyes and made them dance mischievously as he explained that they weren't really fighting, as they weren't either scratching or hitting in the face.

With eyes that twinkled until they looked strangely like Jonathan's own mischievous little orbs, the father sat Solomon-like in judgment, and with great gravity decided the case. On Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays, the doll was to be Jef-

fereson Davis, the property of Jonathan alone, for Jonathan was the elder, and surely twelve months and more of seniority carried some rights. On Tuesdays and Thursdays and Saturdays, David was to be entitled to sole possession, with the right of denying all titles save that of Abraham Lincoln, for he was the younger, and certainly youth must be served.

On Sundays—for, in those days, Sunday was the Sabbath—the doll was to rest, if he could rest under the appellation of Jefferson Davis Abraham Lincoln Bowe, the last name being his heritage, for it was David and Jonathan's own.

When he had delivered himself of this prodigious ultimatum, the little boys' father left them, and straightway told all

the circumstances to their mother, and during the telling they both laughed, and a fitful expression came over the mother's face, while she hugged the boys' little sister closer to her bosom and looked down with a trifle of the wistful upon the sleeping baby girl.

"I suppose boys *will* fight, father," she said.

"It's as natural for them to squabble," he replied, smiling, "as it will be for this young lady to cuddle her doll's head in the hollow of her left arm—" He leaned down and kissed his wife's hand where it rested on the French flannel swaddlings of the baby, and then looked up mischievously into her face;—"just as you are doing right now."



Jefferson Davis defies the enemy

She leaned over and rested her cheek against his, and spoke the irrelevant, half-whispered word "father," but the tone and timbre of her voice, and the little sidewise look from under her drooped eyelids, said more than will ever be written in any printed book or told in words.

On his days, Jefferson Davis won great battles, while on his days Abraham Lincoln performed feats of valor that suggested even the knightly doings of King Arthur's court, but sometimes there were disturbances, engendered by the uncertainty as to whether it was an Abraham Lincoln day or a Jefferson Davis day, in which case Mr. O'Brien was referred to as the arbiter, and he always rose to the occasion.

"Mond'ys, an' Windsd'ys, an' Frid'ys,"

he declared to Jonathan, "he's yours. An' Chusd'ys, an' Thursd'ys, an' Sattherd'ys he's yours, laddie," to David. "Noo ye mus' think an' setthel the matter fur yer-silves."

"'Tis Chusd'y, the day is," or "'tis Windsd'y, the day is," whichever it was, and the declaration always brought peace—envy even was silent.

So time went—not a very long time, but enough to wear sadly on Jefferson Davis Abraham Lincoln, the doll, who became from his many labors very draggled and gaunt. Jonathan's debonaire enterprises with him rather overshadowed the more ponderous exploits of David, who thought slower, and, had it not been for the unconscious intervention of Aunt

Rachel, the family's ex-slave, Jonathan would have triumphed; but she, as the unsuspecting instrument of destiny, changed fate and dragged Jonathan's pride in the very dust. Her interference was wholly without malice, for even thought of malice was unknown to her, she being a shouting Methodist, and one of the elect. But one day as she labored over her washing she chanced to be singing, when David wandered by:

“Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree,
Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree,
Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree,
While we go marchin' on.”

David paused. An impish grin spread over his usually placid features. Here was a method of humbling Jonathan and turn-

ing his day with the doll to gall and vinegar, and, when the time came to fling the bolt, he did so with boyish delight.

Without any pausing to inquire into the origin of the calumny so unexpectedly leveled against his property, Jonathan rose in swift negation, crying from sheer inability to answer song with song, and when the battle was at its height the boys' father came up unnoticed and a frown gathered as he saw that this quarrel was very real. Without any preliminary inquiries he separated the combatants, spanked both of them amply and impartially, and sent them to their mother to answer to her.

Then he seized the bedraggled doll and threw him far off into one corner and followed his owners indoors. When he saw

them they were still tear-stained and heaving with the reflex that comes after the surge of sobs has ceased, but they stood before their mother and the baby sister and held hands, saying, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite." When they had finished they resignedly kissed and David again broke into sobs, while Jonathan, struggling, kept the tears back and accepted the inevitable with its accompanying gills. Then their mother drew them close up to her and soothed them with that wonderful story of the Rabbit and the Tar Baby, which was a very old story, even when Uncle Remus told it to the little boy.

But the next day Jefferson Davis Abraham Lincoln was nowhere to be found. Reconciled by their loss, the little boys

consulted Mr. O'Brien, who, for the life of him, couldn't tell them a thing. Asking their father what had become of the doll was out of the question, and days passed—days when the sun beat down on the doll and days when the rain beat down on him as he lay in the very thickest of gooseberry bushes, lost but at peace. Mr. O'Brien even gave up the search, saying that there had evidently been a kidnaping, which explanation the boys gravely accepted, but still mourned, not even comforted by prospect of a visit from Santa Claus, for Christmas was near at hand.

And then one morning David woke up with a fever, and a little rash appeared on his body that made the doctor shake his head. The baby was sent away and Jona-

than was kept from the room, which was hard on both of the boys, for from the time they could remember they had slept in each other's arms; but it was more hard on David than on Jonathan, for a fever burned in him with a fierce flame.

He was so very ill that the doctor's face was grave when he looked at him, but his father and his mother looked at each other with pleading eyes. One or the other of them was with him always, and the white spot from the chimney of a night-lamp made a circle on the ceiling of his room. Miserable in his loneliness, Jonathan slept ill, and one night, awaking, he found his mother kneeling by his bedside, her form shaken by choked sobs. Through the door he could hear a voice that was David's,

yet not like David's, high-keyed and monotonously querulous, asking in delirium for Abraham Lincoln, the doll. When the morning came it was all a memory, but in the haze of it there centered dimly the pathetic crying of David for Abraham Lincoln, in the dark.

Jonathan told Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. O'Brien shook his head while a mist came into his tender old eyes. He patted Jonathan and muttered, half bowing, "Mother av God, spare him to us." It was a devout prayer.

But Jonathan, ignorant of the shadow of the angel, was not daunted, and having searched everywhere, searched again, and searching found the doll. A rare smile lit up his hazel eyes. Here was Abraham



Abraham Lincoln holds the fort

Lincoln, and David, sobbing in the night, longed for him. He took him proudly into the house and wanted to give him to his brother, but all were so grief-worn that he lost heart and hid him deep under the covers of his bed. In the agony of the household he was little noticed, but he cared not, for his heart was heavy, thinking of David crying in the dark. He crept into his night drawers almost affrighted, and burrowed deep under the covers to where the doll lay and hugged him, making believe he was David.

Far in the night watches some undeniable mystery woke him from sleep and, whispering, told him again of David crying for the doll. He sat bolt upright and shivered a little from fear of being alone. The

door was open and the shrilling of his brother's voice came thinly in. He slid one canton-flanneled leg out of the bed-clothes and stole silently to the room where David lay, his little life flickering and almost burned out. By the bed was his mother, worn and dim-eyed from silent weeping, and the patter of his feet was unnoticed until he was close at hand.

There was David, fever-parched, with one hot arm out of the covers, and there Jonathan laid Jefferson Davis Abraham Lincoln, the much worn doll. The arm crooked weakly and, feeling the weight, closed on it and brought the doll against the thin face. The mother looked up, hardly seeing or grasping the tableau, and then David opened his eyes with affright

and felt Abraham Lincoln and saw Jonathan, and said, "Hullo." Then over his wasted features crept the shadowy flicker of a smile.

Jonathan, clasped to his mother's bosom, could feel the struggle of choked sobs. "My little boys!" she said imploringly. "O God, spare them both to me!" And when she looked again she saw David with Abraham Lincoln nestled close on his shoulder, his eyes closed, but smile-lined with the sleep that showed the crisis was past. On his forehead was a little beady glitter of perspiration, and her heart thrilled with a new-born gladness that made her strain Jonathan closer to her breast.

With her face hid in his cotton-flannelled shoulder, she wept softly, and then the

Angel of Death flew out of the window into the mystery of Christmas eve, with its jingling of sleigh-bells, its trampling of reindeer, and its memories of the Christ-child; and David, with Abraham Lincoln close clasped against his fever-worn, thin face, rested after the battle—the victory won against great odds by the help of Jonathan and that valiant soldier, Jefferson Davis Abraham Lincoln Bowe.





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